

Group I, claims 70-71, 76-77, 110-123, 126-146, 148-166, 169-186 and 189, and Group II, claims 223-242 are not separate groups. An application may be properly required to be restricted on one or more patentably distinct inventions only if (a) the inventions are either independent or distinct as claimed **and** (b) there is a **serious** burden on the Examiner (see MPEP §803, emphasis added by Applicant's representative).

If the search and examination of an entire application can be made without serious burden, the Examiner must examine it on the merits, even though it includes claims to independent and distinct inventions (MPEP §803, under the heading Restriction-When Proper). The Examiner does not appear to have met the burden of showing a *prima facie* case why there would be a serious burden to search and examine the entire application (MPEP §803).

Furthermore, Examiners must provide reasons and/or examples to support conclusions (see MPEP §803, under the heading GUIDELINES). The Examiner has not presented objective evidence or appropriate explanation for the conclusory statement that Group I has separate utility from Group II (see Office Action on pages 2-3). Therefore, the Office Action does not appear to establish a *prima facie* showing that there would be a **serious** burden on the Examiner to search and examine the entire application (MPEP §803). As such, the requirement for restriction does not appear to be proper and should be withdrawn (MPEP §803).

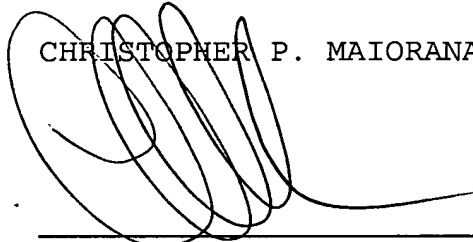
Accordingly, the present application is in condition for allowance. Early and favorable action by the Examiner is respectfully solicited.

The Examiner is respectfully invited to call the Applicant's representative should it be deemed beneficial to further advance prosecution of the application.

If any additional fees are due, please charge Deposit Account No. 50-0541.

Respectfully submitted,

CHRISTOPHER P. MAIORANA, P.C.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Christopher P. Maiorana
Registration No. 42,829

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c/o Sandeep Jaggi
Health Hero Network
2000 Seaport Blvd., Ste. 400
Redwood City, CA 94063

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